PFLAG
Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

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Keeping Famiies Strong

June, 1999

Violence in the Public Schools

The following statistics on Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-67 has been reported by the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

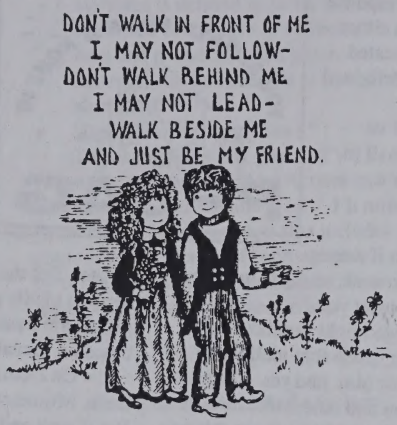
Public school principals were presented with a list of crimes and asked to report the number of incidents of each type of crime that had occurred at their schools during the 1996-97 school year.

The crimes about which schools were asked were murder, suicide, rape or other type of sexual battery, physical attack or fight with a weapon, robbery, theft or larceny, and vandalism.

Respondents were provided with definitions for each of these types of crime. Under the assumption that crimes or offenses reported to police would be more accurately recalled, schools were asked to report only those incidents for which the police or other law enforcement representatives had been contacted. It was also assumed that requiring a benchmark of law enforcement contact would minimize subjective judgment about which incidents to include.

Only crimes occurring at the school, including those that took place in school buildings, school grounds, on school buses, and at school-sponsored events or activities, were to be reported.

While student victimization and teacher-reported data on crimes occurring at school have been collected and reported elsewhere, school principals were asked to report unduplicated incidents at the school level.



QUOTE FROM ALBERT CAMUS
ILLUSTRATED BY JUSTINE R. SCHACHTER

During 1996-67, about 4,000 incidents of rape or other types of sexual battery were reported in our nation's public schools. There were about 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights in which weapons were used and 7,000 robberies in schools that year. About 190,000 fights or physical attacks not involving weapons also occurred at schools in 1996-67, along with about 115,000 thefts and 98,000 incidents of vandalism.

Because the sample size was not large enough to produce reliable estimates for very rare events, the survey was not able to estimate either the percentage of schools experiencing one or more incidents of murder or suicide or the total number of these crimes that occurred at public schools during 1996-97. For example, in in the sample of 1,234 public schools, murder was not reported by any of the schools and, similarly, only four schools in the sample reported any incidents of suicide. The rarity of the occurrence of these crimes at schools, given the sample size of the study, precluded the generation of reliable national estimates.

But in a descriptive case study of violent deaths in schools, Kachur, et al., estimated that there were 105 school-associated violent deaths including 85 murders occurring a schools during a two-year period from 1992 - 1994.

(S.P. Kachur, et al., "School Associated Violent Deaths in the United States, 1992-94," *Journal of the American Medical Association,* June 12, 1996, 275(22): 1729-1733.)

Overall, more than 8,000 hate crime incidents were reported in the United States in 1997. For 1998 the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs reported a 108 percent increase in gay-bashing violence that left victims hospitalized. Assaults and attempted assaults with firearms against gays and lesbians rose 71 percent, the report found. Nearly two in 10 young people said they know a victim of a gender-based crime.

Meanwhile, President Clinton has asked Congress to extend federal hate crime laws to include offenses based on sexual orientation, gender or disability. He also has ordered the Education Department to begin collecting data on hate crimes on college campuses.

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You Always Have A Home in PFLAG

I designed a logo which says, "You Always Have a Home in PFLAG." It has been made into tee-shirts, bookbags, sweatshirts, enamel pins, and bumperstickers.

Lately, I have been getting a lot of response to the two bumperstickers that I have on either side of the license plate on my car —repeated "thumbs up" signs from those who are delighted to see a PFLAG bumpersticker.

But, truly the most touching thing I've experienced was after coming out of a mall in Northbrook, Illinois. Waiting by my car was a young African-American man. I asked him if I could help him and he said:

"I just want you to know how much it means to me to see your bumpersticker. It makes me, as a gay man, feel safe and I just wanted to wait here and meet you."

It never occurred to me that this logo might produce that effect, but it makes sense. He knew that inside that mall was a person who would embrace him, care for him, and yes . . .put herself in harm's way if need be for him and others like him.

Perhaps it's just a pipe dream, but I would like to see this as pervasive as the "I have an honor student in . . . High School " bumpersticker.

The good thing is that it's not an in-your-face message. It's a quiet message of support. It shows that the people inside that car, care.

The bumpersticker can be ordered from the website: www.outwear.com. Just click on PFLAG. You can also call Maria S. Nasca at 639-784-3210. Bumperstickers are $2.00.

Jesse "The Body" Speaks

In a recent interview with Advocate Magazine, Jesse "The Body" Ventura, Governor of Minnesota, spoke about his views on gay issues. Here's a capsule:

- On Gay Equality — "I believe everyone's a human being and should be treated with the dignity accorded to every human being. . .I've had gay friends throughout my life and have enjoyed their friendship very much. And I came to realize that everyone is human and that sexual orientation really has nothing to do with anything."
- "There should be laws to provide equality. Hopefully, our constitution should do that. But there are times for whatever reason that it doesn't seem to totally prevail. So laws are needed to make sure people are treated equally. Minnesota bans discrimination based on sexual orientation, and I support that."
- On Domestic Partnerships— "I have no problem with them. Minnesota doesn't provide for domestic partnerships. But if gays and lesbians wanted to make the commitment under law, I wouldn't oppose it."
- On Gays in the Military —"I couldn't care less what a person's sexual orientation is, and I'm an ex-Navy SEAL. I'd get rid of "don't ask, don't tell."
- Ventura believes that science will prove that sexual orientation is innate — "When people like Trent (Lott) and Reggie (White) take a position that you make a choice, I always ask, 'Well, when did you make yours? When did you choose to be hetero?' It really throws them off."

KEEPING FAMIILIES STRONG

A membership in PFLAG extends a helping hand to families who have gay members; provides educational material for families and the public; brings interesting and timely articles about gay issues; offers a family voice that stands for equality and justice for all human beings.

Local membership includes newsletter

____Low income .$5.00-10.00
____Individual . .$20
____Household . . $30
____Supporting. . $60 $_____

National PFLAG membership $8.00 $_____

Total $_____

Special gift _____(qualifies for matching funds)

Name_____

Adress_____

City, State, Zip_____

Phone: _____

Make checks payable to Colorado Springs PFLAG and mail to P.O. box 10076, Colorado Springs, CO 80932.
Membership and contributions are tax deductible. All information will remain confidential. PFLAG is a 501(C) 3 nonprofit organization.
If you need a receipt for tax purposes please call 591-6793.

CFV 1999 Agenda Revealed

Recently Citizens Project, a strong voice for tolerance in Colorado Springs, obtained the 1999 "strategic plan" of Colorado for Family Values. The *Denver Post* also received a copy and verified its authenticity with CFV.

CFV's ideology has not changed — they seek government endorsement of discrimination based on sexual orientation. But a shift of strategy to obtain that goal is apparent in the 1999 strategic plan. Their new focus will be on "politics prior to issues." Debating the issues will take a back seat to political maneuvering as they work to put into office "officials with our ethical or moral standpoint."

The five -page plan describes their goals (along with a media strategy) to "put the right people in place" on City Council, school boards, and the legislature, and "replace" officials who disagree with the CFV agenda.

Consistent with the plan was Will Perkins' run for the mayor's seat in April. CFV felt that such leadership would establish enough votes on council to "put the [Amendment 2-like] Charter Amendment on the ballot for us" as well as "control all the appointments and prevent the wholesale appointment of homosexuals-lesbians to boards and commissions."

Perkins was soundly defeated along with an encumbent council member friendly to CFV.

Here are other goals listed in the strategic plan:

• Reviving the Charter Amendment effort which bans civil rights protections for gays and lesbians - possibly through a special election this fall.

• "Election of our kind of candidates to local, state, and federal levels."

• Passing a "State Constitutional Amendment" to prevent the recognition of same-sex marriages "including the not recognizing of any kind of "parallel rights and responsibilities" to persons in homosexual or lesbian relationships."

• Passing "Local Charter Amendments." They also pledge to use this strategy in other cities.

- The "defeat of any kind of 'hate-crimes laws' legislation."
- Pass a "Resolution in the schools [apparently through the legislature] to teach all Colorado students that marriage is defined as being between a married couple that is defined as a man and a woman ...and before marriage the best lifestyle is one of abstinence."
- "Reintroduce sodomy laws."

To accomplish these goals CFV proposes creating a Political Action Committee to endorse and fund candidates. The media plan also includes countering the charge of "homophobia" by calling themselves "homoseptic: free from evil influence of homosexual behavior."

Being on either end of a violent situation, whether you seem to have come out with the upper hand or whether you don't seem to, it doesn't resolve anything. It escalates the problem. Hatred leads to more hatred, violence leads to more violence.

. . .Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys

Palmer High Students Turned Down

In January several Palmer High School students approached the principal with a proposal to start a gay/straight school club. The students felt they needed a safe place to discuss gay issues.

Their request was turned down. Principal, Jay Engeln, claimed the club did not relate to the school's curriculum, and if approved, it would lead the way for other clubs such as devil worshippers and hate groups to be approved. The School District supported his decision.

Recently, the American Civil Liberties Union wrote a letter to School District 11 pointing out that the law is on the side of the student. Last year the Cherry Creek School District was sued when a similar student proposal was denied. The school eventually agreed to let the gay and lesbian club meet.

Mark Silverstein, the ACLU state legal director cited a 1984 federal law called the Equal Access Act which provides that all "noncurricular" clubs must be treated equally.

The ACLU is not threatening a lawsuit, but hopes that school officials will realize they can't stop the club from forming simply because they don't approve of the contents of the club's discussions.

INSIDE/OUT GAY YOUTH SUPPORT GROUP

Serving gay, lesbian, bisexual, and questioning youth

Weekly meetings offer rapping and recreational activities under the guidance of trained facilitators. There is no fee.
Meetings are safe, supportive, and confidential.
Indepth counseling available.

Call 575-8484

Sponsored by the Community Council for Adolescent Development

PFLAG Potpourri

Calamity Jane is Coming!

Pflaggers and friends are in for a rollicking good time June 9th when we are joined by Calamity Jane and her sidekick Barbwire for an evening of comic entertainment. The event will be a fund-raiser for PFLAG with all proceeds matched by the Gill Foundation.

Instead of meeting at the church, we are gathering at 7:30 p.m. at the Warehouse at 25 West Cimarron for dessert and the funniest show this side of Hee-Haw.

Glenda Bell and Barb Fisher will celebrate western life in "Calamity Jane Tells Her Tale." Glenda will bring Calamity back to life, sharing her ups and downs as she tries to keep her life together, mostly . . .

Barb Fisher will add guitar music and more laughter to the show.

Bell and Fisher have presented this authentic, highly entertaining history lesson all across the U.S., at colleges and universities, fairs, historical societies, and community organizations.

When: Wednesday, June 9, 7:30 - 9:30 pm.

Where: The Warehouse, 25 W. Cimarron.

Tab: Tickets are $20 per person, which will include non-alcoholic drinks and dessert snacks. (Alcoholic drinks may be purchased at the restaurant bar.) Tickets will be available at the May meeting or at the door.

Reserve your ticket NOW! Call Jean Lynn at 597-1925 or mail your check to 4408 Slide Circle, CS/CO 80917.

PFLAG Conferences Scheduled

On June 11th through 13th the PFLAG Intermountain Regional Conference will be held in Salt Lake City. Delegates from Colorado, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Wyoming chapters will be present. Several Colorado Springs PFLAG members plan to attend and will brief us at the July meeting.

Meanwhile, people who plan to attend the PFLAG National Conference in Washington D.C. next spring should make their reservations as early as possible. The date is April 28-30, 2000, which coincides with the Millennium March on Washington. Thousands of people are expected for the March.

The early bird registration fee of $150 for members will be available through June ($180 for non-members.) After that it goes up to $200 and $230 respectively.

The Crystal Gateway Marriott has secured PFLAG Conference attendees one of the lowest room rates in the area: $143 /single, $153 double, $163 triple and $173 quad (not including tax.) Please register for the conference at the same time you reserve your room. To qualify for the special rate, reservations must be made with the hotel no later than April 6, 2000, HOWEVER, all rooms will probably be sold out long before that date. Call 1-800-228-9290 to make your reservation.

For details call PFLAG National at 202-638-4200; Fax: 202-638-0243. The PFLAG National web site is http://www.pflag.org.

Rhea Murray to speak in Boulder

Jean Hodges, President of the Boulder PFLAG chapter, has announced a special program for lesbian and gay persons and their families on Thursday evening, June 17th at the First United Methodist church at 15th and Spruce in downtown Boulder.

The program will feature Rhea Murray, a PFLAG mom from Seymour, Indiana. Rhea is the author of the inspiring new book entitled, *Journey to Moriah* —the true story of the emotional, spiritual and intellectual triumph of a woman who found herself unable to sacrifice her child, a gay son, on the altar of benighted social and religious convention. Copies of her book may be purchased at the meeting and will be autographed by Rhea.

The program convenes at 8:00 p.m. Rhea, an inspiring speaker who has appeared on national talk shows and spoken at national conventions, will share her personal story. Lesbian and gay persons are invited to bring their parents to this special meeting. A reception will follow.

Jean sends a special note to the Colorado Springs Chapter: "This is our Gay Pride Week in Boulder and we are inviting the public to this program. We will have our usual confidential support groups at 7 p.m for members. We would be very pleased if any of you want to join us and have a chance to meet Rhea".

July 14th Program

The highly acclaimed film "It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in School" will be shown at the July meeting.

The film is slated to be shown on some PBS stations in June and has been denounced by the AFA which is attempting to raise money for a film that will counteract "the damage radical members of the gay movement inflict on our children . . ."

Gay Teens Face High Suicide Risk

Once again, research by a team of U.S. health providers has concluded that high school students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or simply unsure of their sexual orientation are three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual class-mates.

The findings may help to identify teens at risk for suicide and suggest that it may be important to explore "the effects of marginalization on adolescent development and well-being," the investigators write.

Robert Garofalo and colleagues at the Children's Hospital in Cambridge, Mass., and the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health in Baltimore, Md., used data from a 1995 survey of over 3,300 high school students. The survey, conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, included questions on sexual orientation and suicide attempts.

One hundred twenty-nine of the students identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or not sure of their sexual orientation (GLBN). Analysis of the data indicates that GLBN students were 3.4 times more likely to report a suicide attempt in the past year, compared with heterosexual students, according to the report in the May issue of *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine.*

"The dramatic increase in the death rate from suicide among youth (over the past 50 years) makes the identification of significant risk factors a matter of public health importance," the authors conclude. "Improving the understanding of suicide risk assists in the identification of vulnerable youth as well as in the development of effective adolescent suicide prevention programs."

Fortune 500 Companies Court Gay Consumers

According to the LA *Times,* advertising in the gay media is the fastest growing niche in publishing. Ad dollars in the gay press have more than doubled in the last five years. And so has corporate sponsorship for gay events. In Los Angeles, the gay pride festival broke the $1-million mark, up from $150,000 five years ago.

Seagram's Absolut vodka blazed the trail for advertising to gays in the 1970s and has now taken their gay-friendly ads to mainstream publications.

In 1994 Idea made history with the first prime-time TV spot featuring a gay couple shopping for furniture. Dockers, owned by Levi-Strauss, started advertising in *Out* last year. "It was our way, as a major brand, to acknowledge gay men and women as really productive human beings," says Mark Malinowski, Dockers' senior marketing specialist.

Among other companies advertising directly to gay consumers are American Express, IBM, General Motors, Subaru, Johnson & Johnson, United Airlines, Gap, Levi-Strauss, Alamo Rent-A-Car, Samsung, Universal Studios, MTV, Hartford Insurance, and Diesel jeans.

The growth of advertising in the gay media is attributed to the failure of the recent boycott of Disney by the Southern Baptists and other anti-gay groups.

A Message from National PFLAG About Violence in the Schools

Our deepest sympathies go out to the families and community in Littleton, Colorado. . . The violence in Littleton is a reminder, yet again, that we all must be more sensitive to our children's critical needs.

In every school across the country, youth are excluded and harassed because they are different in some way.. To help avoid another incident of this kind, we at PFLAG suggest that all of us —as parents, family members, school administrators, teachers and community leaders —work harder to foster in our schools and communities an environment of more acceptance for every single student and appreciation for our students' diversity.

We all need to lead the way in fostering respect for all. We all need to lead the way to put a stop to name-calling, taunting and denigration of anyone who is different. And we recognize that this must be part of a broader effort to work against the use of violence to resolve conflicts, and counter the easy access to weapons.

It is critical to remember that youth across America may feel disenfranchised because of actions and words that are rooted in perceptions held by their peers, and even teachers and administrators regarding their race, ethnic identity, religious belief, sexual orientation or gender identity.

We're concerned about all youth who feel this way.

The fact is: kids want to be accepted.

And we must work harder to understand them, educate ourselves and provide a safe space for everyone. *The Coalition of Colorado PFLAG Chapters is a member of the Colorado Safe Schools Project which tracks harassment in the public schools.*

BULLETIN BOARD

PFLAG meetings are held the second Wednesday of the month at the Unitarian Church at Dale and Tejon streets. Doors are open at 6:30 p.m. for social time. Sharing circles start at 7:00 p.m. and the program at 8:00 p.m.

Board of Directors meetings are held at 7:00 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month at the Unitarian Church annex on the corner of Dale and Cascade streets. All members are welcome.

In lieu of the June meeting, we will gather at our regular time —7:00 p.m. at the Warehouse, 25 West Cimarron to enjoy an evening with Calamity Jane and her sidekick, BarbWire. Call for tickets at 597-1925 — $20 includes dessert and non-alcoholic beverages. See page 4 for details.

On Wednesday July 14th, the highly acclaimed video, *It's Elementary* will be shown and we will have a report from our delegates to the regional convention

Other Meetings, Conferences, and Gay Times

Thursday, June 17th in Boulder, Rhea Murray, PFLAG member from Seymour, Indiana and author of *Journey to Moriah* will speak at 8:00 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church at 15th and Spruce in downtown Boulder. Support groups will meet beforehand at 7:00 p..m.

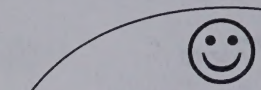
Think Ahead

August promises to be a busy month for PFLAG and the gay community.

- Dignity/USA, a gay Catholic organization, will convene in Denver August 5-8.
- PFLAG's annual potluck picnic is slated for Wednesday, August 11th.
- Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church will be celebrating its 20th anniversary the weekend of August 13-15th. The Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, Founder of MCC, will conduct the Sunday worship service.

The Colorado Springs PrideFest weekend is scheduled for August 27-29. A two-day music festival is planned and the march and rally planned for Sunday the 29th. The celebration marks the 30th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion. Get out your walking shoes and plan to march with PFLAG!

Contact the PFLAG newsletter editor at Tel. and Fax: 719-598-5258—e-mail: PatPfeif@aol.com (Pat Pfeiffer)



Happy Father's Day to all our PFLAG Fathers and Grandfathers!

CS Springs PFLAG Web Site:

www.tde.com/~pflagcos

to TDE (The Denver Exchange) for making the web site available. TDE can be reached at (303) 455-4252 or sales

The Colorado Springs Chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is a non-profit, community-based organization not affiliated with any ethnic, religious, educational, counseling, business, or political group. Our purpose is to support and educate families to better understand homosexuality and to provide the community with information and insights gained through our experience and study.

EVERYONE PLEASE REMEMBER TO KEEP OUR MEETINGS CONFIDENTIAL

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian and bisexual persons, their families and friends, through support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides an opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.